

ST. LUKE'S

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EPISCOPAL CHURCH

WEDDING GUIDELINES

*Revised 2018*

## INTRODUCTION

Congratulations on your engagement! You are likely quite excited about your upcoming wedding, and we at St. Luke's look forward to sharing in that excitement and joy. This booklet will guide you through wedding planning at St. Luke's. If you have any questions about anything that is in this booklet, or anything else, please don't hesitate to call the church office or to speak to the Rector. We are glad you are here and hope that if St. Luke's is not already your spiritual home, you will consider making it so.

The Church teaches that marriage is a physical, spiritual, and mystical union of two people into a covenantal relationship. It is created by the mutual consent of heart, mind, and will of the contracting parties. Marriage is a holy estate, instituted by God, and is intended to be a life-long relationship. Its purpose is for mutual fellowship, encouragement, understanding, and for the procreation of children (if it may be) and their physical and spiritual nurture, as well as for the safeguarding and benefit of society. As such, marriage is a Sacrament of the Church, ordained by Christ, and is a solemn covenant not to be entered into lightly. In this Sacrament, the couple is set apart for each other. Together, they enter into a new relationship, hallowed because it is to reflect God's love and to be an expression of God's purpose.

The Church's marriage service is a solemnization of all of these relationships. Through it the Church currently adds the legal acts that the priest performs as an agent of the State. The priest hears the vows made before God and the congregation, prays for those present and for the couple's life-long happiness, and bestows on them God's blessing for grace to continue in their relationship until the end of their lives.

Since the Solemnization of Holy Matrimony is an action of the Church as well as an event for the couple and their families and friends, it is always a public service of the whole church and its members. As in all other services within the Church, it is under the direction of the Rector of the parish.

The purpose of these guidelines is to provide for marriage liturgies which are rooted in worship of God. The primary purpose of the church wedding is to give God thanks for the gifts of love and relationship, as well as commissioning the couple to live in a covenantal relationship with is a symbol to this world of the power of love and commitment. Having consistent customs for weddings as well as a clear focus on worship will provide for a rich wedding and a strong foundation for marriage.

## CANONS OF THE CHURCH RELATED TO MARRIAGE

### TITLE 1

#### **CANON 18: Of the Celebration and Blessing of Marriage**

Sec. 1. Every Member of the Clergy of this Church shall conform to the laws of the State governing the creation of the civil status of marriage, and also these canons concerning the solemnization of marriage. Members of the Clergy may solemnize a marriage using any of the liturgical forms authorized by this Church.

Sec. 2. The couple shall notify the Member of the Clergy of their intent to marry at least thirty days prior to the solemnization; provided that if one of the parties is a member of the Congregation or a Member of the Clergy, or both parties can furnish satisfactory evidence of the need for shortening the time, this requirement can be waived for weighty cause; in which case the Member of the Clergy shall immediately report this action in writing to the Bishop.

Sec. 3. Prior to the solemnization, the Member of the Clergy shall determine:

- (a) that both parties have the right to marry according to the laws of the State and consent to do so freely, without fraud, coercion, mistake as to the identity of either, or mental reservation; and
- (b) that at least one of the parties is baptized; and
- (c) that both parties have been instructed by the Member of the Clergy, or a person known by the Member of the Clergy to be competent and responsible, in the nature, purpose, and meaning, as well as the rights, duties and responsibilities of marriage.

Sec. 4. Prior to the solemnization, the parties shall sign the following Declaration of Intention:

*We understand the teaching of the church that God's purpose for our marriage is for our mutual joy, for the help and comfort we will give to each other in prosperity and adversity, and, when it is God's will, for the gift and heritage of children and their nurture in the knowledge and love of God. We also understand that our marriage is to be unconditional, mutual, exclusive, faithful, and lifelong; and we engage to make the utmost effort to accept these gifts and fulfill these duties, with the help of God and the support of our community.*

Sec. 5. At least two witnesses shall be present at the solemnization, and together with the Member of the Clergy and the parties, sign the record of the solemnization in the proper register; which record shall include the date and place of the solemnization, the names of the witnesses, the parties and their parents, the age of the parties, Church status, and residence(s).

Sec. 6. A bishop or priest may pronounce a blessing upon a civil marriage using any of the liturgical forms authorized by this Church.

Sec. 7. It shall be within the discretion of any Member of the Clergy of this Church to decline to solemnize or bless any marriage.

#### **CANON 19: Of Regulations Respecting Holy Matrimony: Concerning Preservation of Marriage, Dissolution of Marriage, and Remarriage**

Sec. 1. When marital unity is imperiled by dissension, it shall be the duty, if possible, of either or both parties, before taking legal action, to lay the matter before a Member of the Clergy; it shall be the duty of such Member of the Clergy to act first to protect and promote the physical and emotional safety of those involved and only then, if it be possible, to labor that the parties may be reconciled.

Sec. 2

(a) Any member of this Church whose marriage has been annulled or dissolved by a civil court may apply to the Bishop or Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese in which such person is legally or canonically resident for a judgment as to his or her marital status in the eyes of the Church. Such judgment may be a recognition of the nullity, or of the termination of the said marriage; provided that no such judgment shall be construed as affecting in any way the legitimacy of children or the civil validity of the former relationship.

(b) Every judgment rendered under this Section shall be in writing and shall be made a matter of permanent record in the Archives of the Diocese.

Sec. 3. No Member of the Clergy of this Church shall solemnize the marriage of any person who has been the husband or wife of any other person then living, nor shall any member of this Church enter into a marriage when either of the contracting parties has been the husband or the wife of any other person then living, except as hereinafter provided:

(a) The Member of the Clergy shall be satisfied by appropriate evidence that the prior marriage has been annulled or dissolved by a final judgment or decree of a civil court of competent jurisdiction.

(b) The Member of the Clergy shall have instructed the parties that continuing concern must be shown for the well-being of the former spouse, and of any children of the prior marriage.

(c) The Member of the Clergy shall consult with and obtain the consent of the Bishop of the Diocese wherein the Member of the Clergy is canonically resident or the Bishop of the Diocese in which the

Member of the Clergy is licensed to officiate prior to, and shall report to that Bishop, the solemnization of any marriage under this Section.

(d) If the proposed marriage is to be solemnized in a jurisdiction other than the one in which the consent has been given, the consent shall be affirmed by the Bishop of that jurisdiction.

Sec. 4. All provisions of Canon I.18 shall, in all cases, apply.

## ST. LUKE'S PARISH WEDDING GUIDELINES

### 1. ELIGIBILITY

As Marriage is a Sacrament of the Church, church membership and regular participation are expected by all couples seeking to be married. If the religious aspects of a Christian marriage are not of the utmost importance, it is recommended that the couple seek a secular wedding ceremony.

At the discretion of the Rector, non-members may be married in this Parish. Children of Parish members are considered to be "members" for the purpose of weddings.

The Episcopal Church does require that at least one of the parties to the marriage be a Baptized Christian; that the ceremony be attested to by at least two witnesses; and that the marriage conform to canons of this Church. If either party has been previously married and divorced, please make this known to the clergy soon in this process, as additional discussions and paperwork are required.

All couples, regardless of sexual orientation and gender, may be married at St. Luke's.

### 2. WEDDING DATE:

Before setting a date for the wedding, please clear the date with the Rector to make certain that the church is available and the date is convenient with the Rector. There are certain times when weddings are not to be held.

#### (1) Feasts of the Church

Including, but not limited to: Christmas, Epiphany, Holy Week, Easter, Ascension, All Saints'.

#### (2) During Lent

Weddings will not be scheduled during the season of Lent.

It is expected that the wedding be scheduled at least 6 months before the desired wedding date. No date should be considered "final" until approved by the Rector. Weddings need to only occur on Saturdays. In cases where the couple are active members of the Parish, the marriage liturgy may take place within the context of a Sunday morning liturgy.

### 3. PRE-MARITAL MEETINGS:

The Rector will meet with the couple for at least three pre-marital guidance sessions prior to the wedding. Exceptions may be granted in extreme cases at the sole discretion of the Rector. The couple should make arrangements for these sessions. There may be an additional fee required for any assessments that are used for these sessions. The couple will be responsible for paying a modest fee for a pre-marriage inventory tool.

If the couple cannot meet with the Rector because they live in another community, the Rector will work with the couple to obtain counseling through clergy in that community.

If the couple wish the participation of another minister, the Rector must approve before such participation is sought.

#### **4. WEDDING DIRECTOR/PARISH REPRESENTATIVE**

Since the Rector is in charge of the wedding, it is not necessary to have an outside wedding consultant or director, and it is recommended to not contract with such a person for the wedding. The Rector will arrange the wedding procedures with the couple in advance of the rehearsal. The church may have a parish representative to assist the Rector at the rehearsal, and the representative will also help the bridal party at the time of the wedding. The couple should consult with the parish representative as soon as a wedding date is set with the Rector. The parish representative will meet at least once with the couple, it is suggested this meeting be at least one month prior to the wedding date, to review all of the Parish guidelines and any special needs of the couple.

#### **5. THE REHEARSAL**

A rehearsal should be scheduled prior to the wedding, with the date and time being set as early as possible. The rehearsal should be scheduled prior to any social engagements of the evening. It is strongly suggested that some planning be made on the logistics of the wedding processional prior to the rehearsal event itself, such as using a crucifer and torchbearers.

Everyone taking part in the wedding must attend the rehearsal (including parents of the couple, all attendants, and readers). All members of the wedding party will be on time; the rehearsal should last no longer than one hour.

The marriage license must be brought to the rehearsal. Following rehearsal, the bridal couple and two witnesses will sign the license. The officiating clergy will not sign the license until after the wedding.

#### **6. THE WEDDING**

The order of service for the wedding must follow the order of *The Book of Common Prayer*, or other liturgies authorized by The Episcopal Church. It is recommended that the liturgy include the celebration of Holy Eucharist. Whenever the Eucharist is celebrated as part of the wedding ceremony, all baptized Christians in the congregation are invited to receive Communion. The couple may also have the Eucharist be celebrated at the rehearsal.

The Rector is the Officiant for all liturgies and will make all final decisions regarding the liturgy. Please do not invite other clergy to participate in the liturgy without first getting approval from the Rector. All such invitations should come from the Rector.

Weddings are held in the church building or the chapel of St. Luke's, not on the grounds or at off-site locations.

If a large congregation is expected and special seating instructions are needed, the Rector must be informed so arrangements can be made. Maximum seating capacity is 240 for the church and 45 for the chapel.

It is expected that there will be no more than 3 attendants for each person in the couple.

The St. Agnes Room and the Library are available to the couple and attendants for dressing. The ushers will carry out their duties while the rest of the wedding party wait in their appointed areas.

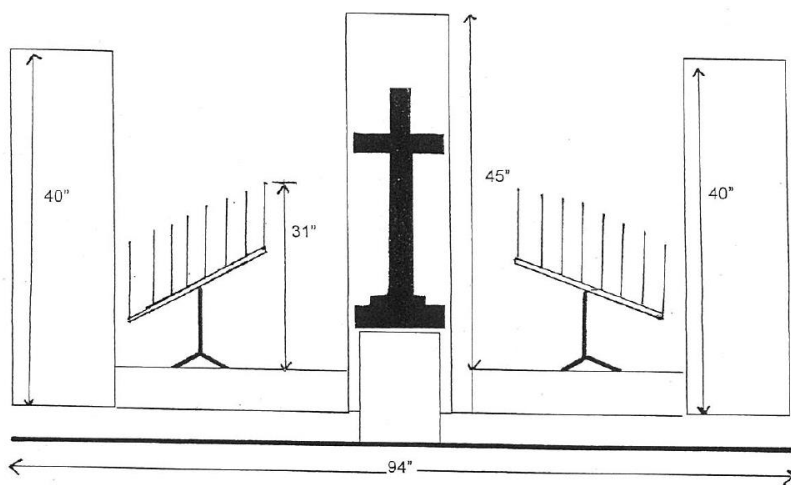
As a wedding is both a legal and religious ceremony, it demands our respect and reverence. If the priest deems that either party is not in a state of mind to enter such a covenantal relationship, the wedding will be postponed at the discretion of the clergy. It is suggested that no substances, including alcohol, be used prior to the wedding to avoid any such situations.

## 7. FLOWERS

Flowers for the wedding party and family should be at the church at least one hour before the ceremony. Be certain that the florist delivers these to the proper place. Arrangements must be cleared with the church wedding director/parish representative. Only silk flowers may be used by a flower attendant.

Flower arrangements for the Church are for use in the church only. If wedding flowers are not to be used for the following Sunday worship service, then the wedding flowers will be sent to the sick and shut-in of the parish.

Arrangements can be as simple as two vases of flowers on the altar or as elaborate as used to dress the church for a major festival and should not exceed decorations used on a regular Sunday. Flowers should not be higher than the cross on the altar. Following are measurements that you and your florist will need:



**Please Note:** the Small Flower Vases used on the altar are 10” high; the Large Vases are 18” high. There are seven windows in the nave with built-in stands for plants, plus three spaces at the large window in the rear of the nave for a total of 10 spaces for flowers. It is recommended that 6” pots be used in these locations.

Other decorations or liturgical elements (such as unity sand, unity candles, photographs on display in the church, etc.) are not to be used.

If pews are to be reserved for immediate family, only ribbon markers or the church’s cloth reserved markers may be used. Tacks or nails are not allowed.

A floor runner is not permissible.

## 8. MUSIC

Music for the ceremony must conform to the rules of the Church and is to be planned with the Rector and the organist. Immediately after discussing your wedding plans with the Rector, make an appointment with the parish organist to plan the wedding music.

The organist of St. Luke's will play for all weddings in the parish. If circumstances make this impossible, then the Rector and the organist must approve the substitute. There is a fee for the services of the organist (*see fee schedule*).

Please contact the parish organist at least four months prior to your wedding day. Do not assume that the organist is available for the day and time you have chosen unless you have checked with him/her personally and cleared it on his/her calendar.

The Rector and the Organist must approve all music used in the service. If a soloist is used, that person must practice with the organist. An instrumental soloist may be permitted to play at various times—during the processional, recessional, and the Eucharist, for example. The organist must approve soloists. You also may request the St. Luke's Adult Choir and/or Bell Choir to participate in your marriage ceremony.

**Music before the service:** Beginning 30 minutes before the time of the service, the organist will play a varied number of musical selections while the congregation arrives. Organ literature by classical composers provides many good choices for music before the service, the organist can provide guidance in selecting this music. The organist usually includes some lively, "upbeat" music toward the beginning of the half hour, ending with softer, more meditative music as the parents of the couple are seated. It would help the organist if you would mention any particular music you would like, within the guidelines mentioned above. Secular songs are not allowed in the church service.

**Processional and Recessional:** The organist can suggest a number of excellent compositions which make appropriate music for the entry and exit of the wedding party. Please keep in mind that this music is not a march to which you will walk in-time, but rather it sets a mood for a dignified procession of the wedding party in and out of the service area. The "traditional" wedding marches of Wagner and Mendelssohn are not allowed due to historic associations. There are many pieces that are appropriate for weddings and the organist can provide guidance in choosing the music. If there is a large number of attendants, two musical pieces may be needed- one for members of the wedding party and a separate piece for the couple. Music at the end of the service may include some of the pieces listed above or others in keeping with the mood of the service.

**Music during the ceremony:** The priest conducting your ceremony can suggest appropriate places where hymns may be sung in the service, or where vocal music would be appropriate.

**Soloists/Instrumentalists:** If you would like vocal music at your wedding, contact the organist, who can suggest accomplished singers familiar with St. Luke's Church and its acoustics. Remember that only sacred texts in appropriate musical settings are allowed; no popular songs may be sung. On occasion, the parish choir provides music for a wedding; for information on using the choir, contact the organist. Instrumental soloists—brass, woodwind, or string—may be used. Local professional

musicians can be suggested by the organist. The fee for vocal or instrumental soloists is negotiable with, and payable to, the individual(s) engaged. An additional \$50 fee will be required if, in the Organist's opinion, a rehearsal with the soloist/instrumentalist(s) will be required.

**Organist:** The parish organist normally plays for all weddings at St. Luke's. If he or she is not available, he/she will designate a local professional organist, who is familiar with the parish organ, to play as substitute. If you have any special requirements, such as organ, instrumental or vocal music which is not in the organist's repertory, please contact the organist well in advance of the ceremony date.

## 9. PHOTOGRAPHS

No photography or videography is to be taken by those in attendance at the wedding, as the focus is on worship and prayer. One stationary photographer may take photos (and/or videography) from behind the nave crossing without using flash. If the photographer becomes a distraction, the service may be stopped to address the problem. So please make sure the photographer is aware of this guideline.

The photographer may meet the wedding party before the wedding for pictures to be taken inside or outside the church or chapel. Photos may be made of the couple as they leave the ceremony. After the order of service is completed, the photographer and wedding party may reenter the church or chapel for pictures.

Please do not prolong the picture taking in the church after the ceremony, since people who attended the service are waiting to greet the couple. Meet in advance with your photographer and make a list of the pictures you will want.

## 10. WEDDING BULLETINS

A bulletin will assist the congregation in the order of the service and may contain special instructions, such as when to sit, stand, or kneel. It can also list the wedding party and other participants. Bulletins will follow the standard church template and must be approved by the Rector. There is a small fee for printing the bulletin (see fee schedule).

## 11. WEDDING RECEPTION

You should make arrangements with the Parish Office if the Parish Hall is to be used for your wedding reception, and you are responsible for cleaning the Parish Hall after the reception concludes. There are fees associated with a wedding reception.

Decorating and cleaning up the Parish Hall and catering the reception is the responsibility of the family.

Smoking is not permitted on St. Luke's campus.

Permission for wine/beer to be served must be approved by the Rector and Vestry. It is not permissible to drink or serve liquor at St. Luke's.

## 12. RICE AND CONFETTI

Rice and confetti are not be thrown at all.



## WEDDING FEES AND HONORARIA

### Wedding Fees:

It is requested that these fees be given to the Rector at the wedding rehearsal. These numbers represent the minimum fees to be given; a couple may choose to give more. A good, Biblical guideline, would be a 10% tithe of the total cost of your wedding. Payments should be made directly to the appropriate person in cash or a check made out to the individual, not to the Church (payments for bulletins, wedding fee, and reception fee should be paid to St. Luke's).

Wedding Fee: Member (no cost); Non-Member \$1,000

Priest: Rehearsal and Service: Member (no cost); Non-Member \$250  
Counseling: Member (no cost); Non-Member \$300

Organist: \$250

Sexton: \$100; \$25/hour for additional setup/clean-up, if there is a reception.

Reception: \$200/first two hours, \$100/hour for each additional hour, up to four total.

### Additional Musicians:

If musicians are requested to work with the church organist, the fee set by those musicians is to be paid. This fee may be paid directly to the musician(s) or given to the Rector for distribution. Additional musicians should not be hired until the Parish Organist has approved the request.

### Wedding Bulletins:

The fee for printing bulletins is \$25 + \$10/100 copies.

### Honoraria:

For members of the Parish, there are no fees due to the priest, though an honorarium is normally offered. The above fee structure offers guidance on amounts.

If a visiting clergy is assisting in the wedding, payment covering all personal expenses, plus an honorarium, should be presented.

If fees are a hardship, please speak with the Rector.

## CONCLUSION

It is the strong and sincere desire that the information contained in this booklet is helpful in making your wedding a happy experience for you and your family. These guidelines are established in order to use the building and furnishings properly and to preserve the heritage and tradition of worship in the Episcopal Church.

## A PRAYER FOR COUPLES

God of tenderness and strength,  
you have brought our paths together  
and led us to this day;

go with us now  
as we travel through good times,  
through trouble,  
and through change.

Bless our home, our partings,  
and our meetings.

Make us worthy of each other's best,  
and tender with each other's dreams,  
trusting in your love.

In the name of Jesus Christ,  
Amen.

## SIGNATURE PAGE

We acknowledge receipt of these wedding guidelines and agree to follow the directions of this booklet.

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Date: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/20\_\_\_